

United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

The Business of Counterinsurgency: Utilizing the Business Practices of Marine Corps Recruiting to Reinforce Marine Corps Operations in a Counterinsurgency Environment

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR: Major Kevin C. Trimble, USMC

AY 08-09

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: ERIN M SIMPSON
Approved: [Signature]
Date: 19 Mar 2009

Oral Defense Committee Member: Francis H. Marlo
Approved: [Signature]
Date: 19 Mar 2009

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 2009		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Business of Counterinsurgency: Utilizing the Business Practices of Marine Corps Recruiting to Reinforce Marine Corps Operations in a Counterinsurgency Environment				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 31	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The Business of Counterinsurgency: Utilizing the Business Practices of Marine Corps Recruiting to Reinforce Marine Corps Operations in a Counterinsurgency Environment.

Author: Major Kevin C. Trimble, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: By analyzing current counterinsurgency training and operations through the lens of Marine Corps Recruiting Command, current techniques and procedures can reinforce the training of Marine Corps Battalions preparing to deploy in support of COIN Operations.

Discussion: In December 2006 Marine Corps Warfighting Publication MCWP 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, was published in conjunction with the United States Army. Coupled with the use of contracted professionals including sociologists and anthropologist, American forces in Iraq began a whole new approach to conducting counterinsurgency operations. Viewed as successful, this approach though was not unique or new.

In 1940 The Marine Corps produced the Small Wars Manual, which in many ways is a clear descriptive manual on how to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The focus of both publications is that to succeed in counterinsurgency, the aim of operations is the populace. With this in mind, it appeared to the author that instead of continuously looking for new ways to attack a problem, the Marine Corps should look internally and try to replicate certain procedures that have already proven successful.

Having been on Recruiting duty as a junior officer I was struck with the similarities between the prescribed methods for COIN in 3-33.5, and those techniques utilized by Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Taken as a business model Marine Corps Recruiting Command has achieved continued success by focusing on the populace. Having former recruiting station commanders succeed as battalion commanders in Iraq, gave credence to this opinion.

Conclusion: Though numerous efforts are underway to support Marine units in counterinsurgency operations, basic selling skills and business planning as utilized through Marine Corps Recruiting can only enhance these efforts. For a recruiter, selling skills are basic skills. Inexpensive to teach and practice, these skills have a proven track record and exist within our current operating forces. This paper will recommend ways to bring them to the current fight.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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PREFACE

This paper is written following numerous conversations with fellow Marines who have served both on recruiting duty and in either Iraq or Afghanistan. There has long been a joke that if you get a group of Marines together who have served in combat and as recruiters, their conversations are usually about recruiting, vice war stories from their respective combat tours. Recently, these conversations have turned more toward a comparative analysis between counterinsurgency (COIN) operations and the distinct similarities with recruiting, primarily the importance of educating Marines in Professional Selling Skills (PSS), which is the most basic skill for every recruiter.

The publication of MCWP 3-33.5 in December 2006 began a way ahead for how American forces conduct COIN operations and this effort has continued with numerous improvements in preparing our warfighters for conducting operations more focused on engaging people, vice weapons systems. From the efforts to increase the Marine Corps' Civil Military Operations capabilities, to the development of numerous cultural awareness programs; the Marine Corps is making aggressive strides to prepare our Marines to win in a COIN environment. The driving force of this paper was to present the idea that there exist a proven system of techniques and practices, primarily those used in recruiting which if taught to those Marines at the tactical level, could only enhance their ability to truly win the non-kinetic fight. The ideas in this paper are not unique. Numerous publications have recently compared COIN operations to business operations, yet transferring these skills down to the squad and platoon levels has been random and inconsistent. It is my belief that if at the minimum, a few squad leaders were exposed to basic sales and PSS, progress can be made and lives would be saved.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the following people for their assistance and support throughout this project:

Professor Erin Simpson, Assistant Professor of National Security Affairs, Marine Corps Command and Staff College

Dr. John Gordon, Professor of National Security Affairs, Marine Corps Command and Staff College

Lieutenant Colonel Bjornar Lunde, NOR Army, Faculty Advisor, Conference Group 11, Marine Corps Command and Staff College

BGen Paul Lefevbre, USMC

Colonel Julian Dale Alford, USMC

Colonel Jim Minich, USMC

Colonel Robert Sinclair, USMC

Lieutenant Colonel Jason Bohm, USMC

Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Dill, USMC

CWO5 Karl Mayfield, USMC, National Training Team, Marine Corps Recruiting Command

Major Valerie Jackson, USMC, Security Cooperation Training and Education Center.

My wife Jennifer, for continued patience and support in allowing me to be a Marine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	i
DISCLAIMER.....	ii
PREFACE.....	iii
INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND.....	1
INTELLIGENCE PREPARATION OF THE BATTLEFIELD (IPB).....	4
OPERATIONAL DESIGN.....	6
DECISION MAKER ENGAGEMENT.....	10
RECRUITING AND TRAINING HOST NATION SECURITY FORCES.....	13
SUSTAINMENT TRAINING.....	14
LEADERSHIP.....	16
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
ENDNOTES.....	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	23

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2007, following four years of extended combat operations in Iraq, the US Army, in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps, published FM (Field Manual) 3-24 (also published as Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5) titled *Counterinsurgency*. This document, which was publicized through some journalistic circles as a breakthrough in future U.S. engagement strategy, was shepherded throughout its research and writing by Army General David Petraeus.¹ Using FM 3-24 as the source document for a new “way ahead” in the war in Iraq, General Petraeus assumed command of all coalition forces in Iraq in the summer of 2007 and began his new campaign with what is now known as “the surge”. With the appearance of a unique strategy of substituting high tech and kinetic combat engagement with boots on the ground, and increased face to face engagement with the local population many thought Petraeus’ approach to be rather novel. But the surge taking place in Baghdad in the summer of 2007 was not unique and neither was the thought process of FM 3-24 (MCWP 3-33.5).

In 1940, the US Marine Corps produced “The Small Wars Manual”, a product of experiences garnered from the Banana Wars in Central and South America following World War I (WWI). The Small Wars Manual focused on the timeless tenants of counterinsurgency (COIN) which is primarily: to defeat an insurgency, a force must engage with the population and, through immersing in the culture and cooperative productive works, build trust. This trust is a segue to the ultimate objective of building

local support for the host nation government and rejecting the ideology and objectives of the insurgency.²

The design of a COIN operation is similar to that of a business plan, primarily, a need-based sales plan. This paper will compare and contrast six tenants of COIN currently practiced by Marine Infantry Battalions with six similar core functions of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC). MCRC enlists approximately 38,000 men and women into the Marine Corps each year.³ With a force of approximately 3,100 recruiters and support personnel, MCRC operates as much like a business organization as that of a Marine Infantry unit in a COIN environment.⁴ Following this precept, many parallels can be drawn and lessons learned (Fig 1).

For example, in 2007 the RAND Corporation produced a study titled, *Applying Madison Avenue Principles and Recent Operational Experiences to COIN and Stability Operations*. In this study, it is recommended that,

“The U.S. military should consider the marketing strategies and segmentation of targeting to better understand the indigenous population and identify audiences based on their level of anticipated support for coalition presence and objectives.”⁵ - “The fundamental principle of commercial marketing is that businesses must first learn the wants and needs of their customers.”⁶

The final and most imperative point made in this study is the recommendation to “train and select U.S. Force *Sales Staff*”.⁷ This point refers to those military personnel charged with the interaction of the local population are trained in negotiation, much like their corporate counterparts.⁸

Can the success and practices of MCRC enhance the training and execution of Marine Corps Infantry Battalions in a COIN environment? The following supporting questions require examination:

- (1) What are the parallels between Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) in COIN, and Market Analysis by MCRC?
- (2) How is Operational Design in COIN operations similar to MCRC's structure analysis process?
- (3) How is the identification and engagement of local leaders in COIN consistent with MCRC's emphasis on need-based sales?
- (4) How is the recruitment and training of host nation security forces in COIN, equally as important as the development of a successful pool program as practiced by MCRC?
- (5) What methods of sustainment training used by MCRC can be carried over to a successful COIN operation? Is there an equal requirement for leadership in both recruiting and COIN?

Ultimately I conclude that *by analyzing current counterinsurgency training and operations through the lens of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, techniques and procedures can reinforce the training of Marine Corps Battalions preparing to deploy in support of COIN operations.*

Fig 1

	COIN	MCRC
1	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)	Market Analysis
2	Operational Design	Structure Analysis
3	Decision Maker Engagement	Professional Selling Skills (PSS)
4	Recruit/Train Host Nation Security Forces	Establishing a Pool Program
5	Sustainment Training	Sustainment Training
	LEADERSHIP	

Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB):

IPB for a military operation is the “systematic, continuous process of analyzing the threat and environment in a specific geographic area.”⁹ In a COIN environment, the threat is any group, condition or individuals which may hinder the supporting force (forces) from accomplishing its primary mission of fostering the development of effective governance by a legitimate government.¹⁰ With a focus aimed more toward the local populace than a military threat, the military unit in support of COIN must analyze the area of operations (AO) and seek out what it considers its target population; those areas and population centers which both support and could potentially legitimize the existing host nation government. In conducting IPB for COIN operations, the following factors must be considered:

1. Cultural Geography: family, tribal, ethnic, religious, or other social which constitute the makeup of a particular area.
2. Stability in a given area: Economic, rule of law, conflict resolution
3. Relationships with neighboring areas.
4. History of area during previous conflicts.
5. Historical response to outside interference.
6. Basic Services: Are they lacking, or did they ever exist (economic, health, education)?
7. Lines of communication to other population centers: Terrain, influence.
8. Support for insurgency: If support for insurgency exists, is it through coercion, or sympathy?¹¹

This doctrinal emphasis can be seen in the field as well. Utilizing existing planning models such as the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP), and the education received at service level staff colleges, Marine planners in a recent survey state their primary concern was the demographics of the people.¹²

MCRC conducts IPB of a similar human terrain. Known as a "market analysis," this form of IPB analyzes, the target population, 17-24 year old male, high school graduates in a specific geographic area.¹³ Because the focus of recruiting, as in COIN, is people oriented, similar contributing factors are taken into consideration:

1. Culture: Family, religious, and average age of residence.
2. Economic stability: Does the local economy offer employment options to the target population.

3. Historical propensity to enlist: Have previous generations been supportive of the military.
4. Lines of communication: Terrain, geographic area in respect to other population centers.
5. Local decision makers: Parents, teachers, coaches, pastors or local politicians.
6. Influence of advertising and information operations.

As stated, IPB is a continuous analysis. In both COIN and recruiting, a top down initiation with "bottom-up refinement" is most effective. In a survey of eight Marine Officers who have all served as both Recruiting Station Commanding Officers (RSCO) and Battalion Commanders in either Iraq or Afghanistan, the concurrence of IPB to market analysis is overwhelming. One officer states that in conducting IPB he wanted to know the following,

"What was their (Iraqi civilians) past in terms of their support for U.S. activities?

If they were part of the insurgency in the past, and if so why?

Can they be sold on us and if yes, how?"¹⁴

In all of the aforementioned surveys, each of the officers stated that, similar to recruiting, the number one focus of IPB was the population in their area of operations (AO).¹⁵

Operational Design:

In conducting Operational Design of a COIN operation, the initial IPB is used to determine where specific lines of operation may be more successful. Operational Design encompasses both problem identification and problem [mission] solving.¹⁶ In COIN

operations, operational design is ever-changing. The aim of operational design is coordinating a unit's efforts along specific lines of operation (LOO) in support of the overall mission. COIN operations may establish LOO's such as security, governance, basic services, economics and education; these are in a sense the focus areas toward which a commander will place his assets, resources and efforts in order to accomplish the mission of gaining support for the host nation government.¹⁷ For example, rough terrain in one area may inhibit transportation, thus adversely effecting economic development and basic services. An area with a history of harsh treatment at the hands of foreign occupiers may not be conducive to immediate, large-scale military force presence. In this case, for example, a provincial reconstruction team with a contingent of host nation security forces can shape the area through initial engagement. The key to effective operational design is to initially place both personnel and resources in position to assess the needs of the population and then quickly support those needs. Following this initial support, operational design is continuous, bottom-up refinement in order to reassess where best to support, or in some cases isolate, a given area in order to continue to establish the support and credibility of the host nation government.

For MCRC, "structure analysis" is the method for which a campaign is designed. Similar to COIN, structure analysis utilizes the initial IPB, designs where assets, forces (recruiters) and resources can best reach the target market and begins to refine the needs of the area for further development and exploitation. This refinement is conducted through a systematic formula aimed at identifying the target market (17-24 year old male, high school graduates).¹⁸ MCRC identifies the target market as Civilian, Non-Institutionalized Population, or CNIP. Viewing a specific U.S. zip code for example, a

study is conducted of the overall military enlistments of the previous three years in this zip code. This factor is labeled (P) for propensity to enlist. Computing these metrics in a specific formula determines the amount potential qualified applicants in a given area. From this analysis, manpower (recruiters) and resources are then allocated.¹⁹ Though more science than art, the MCRC approach to operational design underlines the tenant that, in designing any operation or campaign, thorough research and analysis of the human terrain must be conducted or assets and resources may be wasted.

As an example of operational design (structure analysis), a recent RSCO explained that in the southern portion of his recruiting area, located in the Midwestern U.S., support for the military was strong and a large portion of the young male population was in favor of enlisting in the military. A negative aspect of this area was that the majority of the young male population was not qualified for military service, primarily due to failure to meet the minimum intelligence requirements. Conversely, the portion of this officer's AO which contained a large portion of qualified young males was located in an area with a low propensity for enlistment. Though assuming risk, the RSCO relocated a preponderance of his recruiting force to the area with qualified males and weighted this force with additional resources in order to accomplish the assigned mission.²⁰

Geographical terrain, for example, is a consideration for any business or military's organization. In areas such as Idaho and Montana, population centers are separated by large expanses of territory. For any organization, geographical terrain will have a direct impact on resource allocation. In the case of MCRC, the cost in resources of engaging a small population across a large area far exceeds utilizing numerous recruiters and assets in a concentrated population center such as a large capital city. Similarly,

allocating large resources to an area with a both a low propensity for enlistment and a less than favorable history of military support far exceeds the cost of focusing recruiting efforts in a historically pro-military population center. As was mentioned in the previous example operational design may also entail the assumption of risk. Though a portion of the population may be in favor of the product, if support of this demographic does not support mission success, excess engagement is fruitless.

In both COIN and recruiting, operational design is a continuous process. The aim in many ways is to focus more on the decision makers within the target market than the individuals themselves. Using the cultural analysis from IPB and market analysis, both recruiting and COIN forces can often determine that decisions that may appear to be individual based are actually made by either groups or influential individuals who wield the most influence within a geographic area. For example, the arming of Sunni militia's to fight Al Qaeda in the Western Al Anbar province in the summer of 2007, was not the result of recruiting individual soldiers. Instead, tribal leaders of the predominately Sunni area made the decisions on behalf of their respective tribes to arm their young men in order to fight against Al Qaeda terrorists.²¹ Utilizing a cultural analysis which identified the tribal customs within this AO, American leaders made local leaders their target market in executing the security LOO.

Recruiting is similar in that many American cultures are driven by the opinions of a hierarchy of decision makers. From parents, teachers, coaches and even religious leaders, an individual's wishes and desires may go unfulfilled without the approval of these influencers. An effective operational design targets these decision makers more so than individuals.

Decision Maker Engagement

"We built 18 schools, when what they really needed was clean drinking water"
- Marine Battalion Commander, Iraq 2006-2007

In developing the Operational Design of a COIN operation, culture and historical context of a given area are in many ways at the forefront when determining the allocation of resources and assets. Utilizing bottom-up refinement of both IPB and operational design starts with the initial and continuous engagement of local decision makers. Familiarization with a culture is paramount when engaging influential leaders. As referenced in IPB, cultural makeup of a given area is the key information requirement for a COIN force. From language, to customs and social practices, failure to understand and appreciate your target market is similar to walking blind. When dealing with a tribal leader for example, other than language, the process of negotiation is in many ways the most difficult for Marine leaders in COIN operations. In keeping with the focus of "bottom up" refinement, the primary objective in dealing with local leaders is assessing a need. Too often, a COIN force will attempt to utilize a checklist mentality when dealing with local decision makers. Instead of determining what the needs of the population are, far too often American forces tell these leaders what they need, and what they should do. This crucial mistake has caused setbacks both large and small.²² For example, developing infrastructure and schools, in areas where there is no clean water or trafficable roads, or closing off areas along tribal and family boundaries. Despite the good intentions, projects such as these are counterproductive as they more often than not put an American face on a foreign problem. When engaging local leaders, cultural understanding and the identification and follow on support of the local need must be the primary objective.

Mastering the art of deliberation and supporting the request of a leader can in many ways support every line of operation.

In 2007, Dr. Barak Salmoni and Dr. Paula Holmes Eber published, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*, through the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC). This publication defines operational culture as “those aspects of culture that influence the outcome of military operations; conversely, the military actions that influence the culture of an area of operations.”²³ Though this publication expounds on the importance of understanding the host nation, and the influence of local decision makers, like most formal military publications it lacks direction on the importance and proven techniques of face-to-face engagement.

Face-to-face engagement in COIN is not relegated only to host nation population. A COIN operation utilizes multiple nations and organizations all with different capabilities. For example, NGO's may offer more of a capability for providing basic services than that of a Marine Infantry Battalion. Though each organization may have a similar mission, lines of operation as well as ultimate authority may be different. Possessing the ability to negotiate and engage the leaders of adjacent units or supporting organizations is just as crucial to mission success as those engagements with the local population. Failure to understand the mission, objectives and capabilities of supporting organizations could have 2nd and 3rd order effects on previously successful military actions despite one's understanding of the operational culture.

For MCRC, engaging local leaders and the art of deliberation are basic skills inherent in the organization's success. Utilizing a model of need-based sales, Marine recruiters and leaders alike continuously probe to discover a mutually agreed upon need

and then allocate resources and capabilities to support these needs. Through the use of market analysis, followed by information operations and face-to-face negotiations, a successful sales organization meets the needs of the target market in the process of accomplishing its ultimate objective. It can be argued that for a recruiter, the ability to conduct face-to-face negotiations is as important as marksmanship is to an infantryman. Known as Professional Selling Skills (PSS), MCRC places this basic skill before all others for its entire recruiting force.

For more than 20 years MCRC has utilized the consulting company, Achieve Global,²⁴ to support the PSS training of all recruiters and supporting staff. For a basic recruiter, the training pipeline consists of seven weeks of recruiter's school, followed by continuous PSS training upon beginning an initial three year tour at a recruiting station. For both commanders and supporting staff alike, a similar training program is conducted to ensure they are capable of *selling* the Marine Corps.²⁵ Basic PSS is broken down into four steps in which a recruiter establishes rapport, begins to probe (ask questions), discovers a need, and offers support for the need.²⁶ These selling skills, which are the lifeblood for a recruiter, are equally valuable when conducting COIN operations. In many ways the target markets of both COIN forces and Marine Corps recruiters are similar: military aged males. Similarly, the actions of this target market maybe greatly influenced by local leaders, or influencers, and it is this market which must be engaged in order to succeed in both recruiting duty and in a COIN environment. In a recent survey, 100% of Battalion Commanders surveyed stated that PSS training as recruiters proved invaluable while in Iraq or Afghanistan.²⁷

Recruiting and Training Host Nation Security Forces:

The Small Wars Manual states, "In many instances, the recommendations of local civil officials are invaluable in the selection of applicants."²⁸ Though written over 60 years ago, this timeless document underscores the importance of engaging local decision makers. With security as the primary enduring task of any COIN operation, developing host nation security forces, both military and police, establishes the framework for developing a self-sustaining community under a legitimate local government. Training host nation security forces has been a key line of operation for Marine Corps units since the Banana Wars following WW I. In many cases, training centers are developed and volunteers are screened and accepted for enlistment into the host nation military or police forces. In others, an area commander will coordinate with the local leader and request such volunteers, utilizing the authority and influence of these individuals.²⁹ Despite the methods of recruitment or enlistment, the importance of cultural understanding through IPB cannot be overstated. For Marine Corps forces training host nation forces, there must be a clear understanding between the Marine Corps Standard and the host nation standard. From physical fitness to past loyalties and education levels, capability and security in COIN operations is measured through the lens of the host nation culture. Far too often American Forces attempt to put a "host nation face" on local security forces when in fact this force is rejected by the population as they were not considered up to the "local" standard from the beginning. MCWP 3-33.5 calls this the "American way is best" bias and directs that such attitudes are unhelpful.³⁰ By recruiting and establishing rapport with those of influence, they will be accepted culturally.³¹

MCRC has succeeded in building the force from within through what is called the Pool Program. The intent is to enlist individuals who are considered influential leaders amongst their peers and within their communities. At times these leaders may not possess all of the attributes sought in a potential United States Marine, for example some may not be extremely physically fit. Despite these shortcomings, their potential to influence other more qualified individuals compensates the time and resources a recruiter spends in preparing his initial sub-standard applicant. Additionally, the engagement of local influencers or decision makers can be attributed to building this pool. If an influential leader of a community supports the Marine Corps, those within the target market residing within that community have a higher propensity to enlist.

Sustainment Training:

Training in the basic foundations of COIN does not cease upon a battalion's arrival into the AO. From the battalion staff to the individual rifleman, those skills which are considered basic skills should be reviewed, rehearsed and executed as often as possible throughout a unit's deployment. From basic marksmanship to first aid and safety procedures, in-stride training is an enduring task in any military operation. What also must be rehearsed are those skills which may not be considered basic. For example, language training at the basic level must be a constant. COIN operations are focused on the population and with daily interaction with the host nation populace; Marines cannot always count on the presence of an interpreter. From the battalion commander to the

squad leader, the art of negotiation and engagement must be studied and practiced. Creative training methods, including role playing and scenario-based wargaming, can ensure a focus on the target population. Reviewing IPB and operational design down to the squad level to ensure familiarity with the local culture and the units purpose support a clear understanding of the unit's mission.

Utilizing a detailed method to determine measures of effectiveness, MCRC conducts in-stride training throughout a recruiting period to both reinforce success and correct deficiencies. Similar to a bottom-up refinement approach, MCRC utilizes sales data to determine an individual recruiter's strengths and weaknesses. For example, recruiters utilize phone lists acquired from high schools in a local area. Each recruiter is required to call the phone number of every student on their specific list in an attempt to screen a potential applicant for both interest and qualification, and to schedule a potential meeting. Each phone call is logged and the results recorded for future analysis. If the recruiter's ability to schedule appointments is inconsistent with the market analysis of the specific area, this trend is documented. Such trends may point to a recruiter's deficiency in telephone canvassing techniques, at which time additional training will be given.³² Along with the individual, this data analysis viewed as a whole supports an evolving market analysis. Negative trends may also reveal deficiencies in the operational design of the unit's mission. Such a deficiency as a whole may be corrected through the reallocation of resources, or increased reinforcement in an adjacent area. Regardless of trends and ebbs and flows in a target market; a successful sales organization continuously trains its force in product knowledge and face to face engagement.

“A Force Commander who gains his objective in a small war without firing a shot has gained far greater success than one who has resorted to the use of arms” – Small Wars Manual, 1940

Leadership:

MCWP 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency* prescribes that “those in leadership positions must provide the moral compass for their subordinates as they navigate this complex environment.” COIN is one such complex environment and leadership in this type of operation is required at more than just highest levels. From squad leader to battalion commander, decision making and leadership against an asymmetric threat is imperative to success. MCWP 3-33.5 goes on to state that “exercising leadership in the midst of ambiguity requires intense, discriminating professional judgment.” With combat outposts spread across a battalion’s AO which in World War II would have been the responsibility of a division, trust and professionalism are core requirements throughout the entire unit. The reference to the moral compass underlines the requirement for a leader who will set the climate of doing the right thing within a unit. From revenge killings to condescending attitudes toward the foreign population, leadership and only leadership can assure military forces are doing what is right.

The requirement for leadership on recruiting duty is a mirror image. Leaders are responsible to set the climate of doing what is right, and providing that moral compass. With a monthly mission of enlisting at least two qualified applicants, recruiters also find themselves in unpredictable environments.³³ The pressure to cut corners or look the other way in order to enlist a young man or woman can sometimes provide as much ambiguity as those Marines in a COIN operation. The same “intense, discriminating, professional judgment” is an absolute requirement for winning the correct way.

“Effective leaders ensure their soldiers and Marines are properly trained and educated.”³⁴ This education starts with establishing the climate of a unit that understands the mission and has a solid understanding of the methods in which this mission will be accomplished. Once this climate is established, intense, realistic training with accurate feedback will ensure that decision makers, down to the small unit level are both comfortable and confident to make decisions, the results of which could have strategic implications. An effective leader ensures that the forces under their command are exercising repetitive decision making to the point where they become a product of intuition.³⁵ In a survey conducted of former RSCO’s who have served as battalion commanders, they each stated that a leader in a dispersed environment must be as much an enabler as a moral compass. With both Recruiting Sub Stations (RSS) and Company Forward Operating Bases (FOB) spread out over a large AO, a commander is most successful when they set the conditions for their units to succeed.³⁶

Where do we find these leaders? In COIN they are chosen from those who have previously performed to an exceptional level. For example, a battalion commander in Iraq was selected for command above 83 % of his peers.³⁷ Similarly, RSCO’s are selected based on exceptional performance as captains in a leadership position. It is not surprising that every year, numerous former RSCO’s are chosen to command battalion’s. Regardless of definitions or doctrinal theories, leadership is a people business, and thus the common denominator of a military unit in any people-oriented operation.

Recommendations

Since November of 2001, every Marine Corps Infantry battalion has deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan. During this same period, almost 10,000 Marines have served as Recruiting Station, Commanding Officer's, Operations Officers, Executive Officers or canvassing recruiters.³⁸ Many of this number have served in both capacities. For those Marines who have served in a more non-kinetic COIN environment, many point to the lessons gained from recruiting duty as being combat multipliers in both Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁹ For the foreseeable future, The United States Marine Corps will be engaged in irregular warfare to some extent. From the Security Cooperation MAGTF, to the Enhanced Company Operations Concept and lastly to the post-combat operations phase of any conflict we may find ourselves engaged; Marine Infantry Battalions must be prepared to operate in a COIN environment.

Unlike the procurement of a high-tech weapons system, the cost of instructing Marines in basic business practices is minimal. For example, as of February 1, 2009 there are 441 officers alone with prior recruiting experience, now serving in the operating forces.⁴⁰ The development of a train the trainer program would be close to effortless. From conducting both market and structure analysis, to basic PSS and overcoming negative influencer classes, Marine leaders from the battalion to the squad can be exposed to the intuitive methods of understanding the target market, and need-based sales. Curriculums have been developed for years. These can be shaped in such a manner as to provide basic instruction followed by recommendations for enhanced sustainment training.

The Marine Corps has allocated incredible funding to contract sociologists, cultural anthropologists and social scientists, when what may possibly be our greatest combat multiplier is within our ranks. With the institution of "Operational Culture Training" in 2005, Marines are being exposed to the intricacies of the foreign cultures in which they may soon find themselves. From language labs, to understanding customs and traditions, small unit leaders are given a view of what they can expect while deployed in a COIN environment. I recommend we develop a system to go inside this culture and immerse Marines in true people-oriented operations. For example, invite a former recruiter now serving in the operating forces to give a basic period of instruction on need based selling. Couple this with a period of practical application and squads of Marines have a base line from which to continuously practice the art of negotiation, which is more common in COIN than kinetic force. The Marine Corps uses rifle ranges to enhance marksmanship, obstacle courses to develop strength and coordination; the Marine Corps should use its own subject matter experts to reinforce the capabilities of those preparing to deploy to an AO dominated by human terrain.

The recent debate has raged as to whether or not the United States is once again preparing to fight the last war. Vietnam was a result of fighting an insurgency through Cold War conventional means. Following the dominating success of the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the U.S. military downsized in favor of a more nation building, peace support operations force. With the beginning of the global war on terror, a small force supported by advanced technology was believed to be the answer for the wars of the future. Partially validated in the opening months of both Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003; it is clear that few nation states can

match the combat power of the high tech American arsenal. As seen following decisive combat operations in both theaters, such an advanced arsenal was not exactly the proper counter punch to an asymmetric threat. The U.S. military trains, equips and deploys to protect national interest. Within the construct of this purpose, it must be prepared for any contingency from conventional force on force operations to nation building, peace support and counter insurgency operations. With fewer personnel resources than its cold war counterpart, today's Marine Corps must anticipate what future missions it may be called to accomplish, and train its force to be not only competent, but effective and flexible to accomplish any mission. Due to globalization and the geo-politics of the 21st century, it can be argued that regardless of the level of conflict in which the Marine Corps participates, eventually, (if not initially), irregular warfare or counter insurgency will become the task at hand.

With this basic assumption, utilizing a few basic business practices of an inherent Marine Corps organization can only enhance the effectiveness of deploying Marine Infantry Battalions. Establishing cultural analysis, leader engagement, and need based selling/negotiations as basic skill sets will not only save time and money, utilizing time tested Marine ingenuity will ultimately save lives.

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- ⁴ Ibid
- ⁵ Helmus, Todd C., Christopher Paul, Russell W. Glenn. *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular support in Theatres of Operation*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007), 2
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- ⁸ Ibid.
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- ¹² Survey Conducted by 6 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.
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- ¹⁷ Ibid
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- ¹⁹ Ibid, 13-16
- ²⁰ Interview With former Recruiting Station Commanding Officer who also served as a Battalion Commander in Iraq, January 18, 2009
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- ²² Survey Conducted by 6 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.
- ²³ Salmoni, Barak A. and Paula Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, August 2007, 14.
- ²⁴ Achieve Global of Tampa, Florida is a registered trademark.
- ²⁵ Interview, CWO5 Mayfield, USMC, MCRC 11 December 2008
- ²⁶ Achieve Global, (Formerly Learning International) PSS Core, Program Book, 1998, 8
- ²⁷ Survey Conducted by 6 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.
- ²⁸ FMRP 12-15, *Small Wars Manual*, United States Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1940 (12-16)
- ²⁹ Survey Conducted by 8 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.
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- ³¹ MCWP 3-33.5, 6-11.
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- ³³ Interview, CWO5 Karl Mayfield, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, National Training Team Officer, December 12, 2008.

³⁴ United States Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency*, (Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 15 December 2006), 7-1.

³⁵ Gompert, David, Irving Lachow, Justin Perkins. *Battle Wise: Seeking Time Information Superiority in Networked Warfare*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2006, 108.

³⁶ Survey Conducted by 6 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.

³⁷ M&RA statistics from FY09 Lieutenant Colonel Command screening board results. Selection rate for battalion command was 17%

³⁸ Data collected from M&RA, HQMC, Quantico, Virginia, Jan 23, 2009.

³⁹ Survey Conducted by 6 Marine officers who have served as both a Recruiting Station Commanding Officer as well as a Battalion Commander in Iraq/Afghanistan, November 15, 2008 - 29 January 2009.

⁴⁰ E-mail from Major Michael Miller, USMC, Ground Major's Monitor, M&RA, HQMC, Quantico, Virginia, February 23, 2009.

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